

Styles House



TMO

Spring 2015

www.styleshouse.org.uk

Welcome from Zoe, Chair of the TMO

I am pleased to be writing to you more than a year after the TMO opened its doors and went live in January 2014. It has been hard work, but we are about to see the first fruits of our labours. We are excited that work to replace the lobby flooring in the main block and the stair flooring in the annex block will start in the week commencing 30th March (it may even have been completed by the time you get to read this newsletter). I am also happy to let you know that the Council has agreed to pay for a “deep clean” to both blocks to resolve a complaint made by Karen, our Treasurer.

This work will take place a few weeks after the new flooring has been fitted. Thank you for completing your questionnaires which has given the TMO many useful ideas on the improvements we need to make. The TMO is working to improve Styles House and we are looking forward to making many more improvements in the future. We know there are still many more things we need to do, as money and time permits.

Unfortunately, we have had problems recently with rats and mice. We have told Pest Control but you can help by carefully disposing of your waste and recycling. Please do remember the recycling bags are collected on a Monday.

Finally, I would like to thank you all for your support and invite you to become an active member of the TMO by joining the Board or one of the sub committees. We need the ideas, energy and participation of all Styles House residents to make sure the TMO works for you and makes Styles House an excellent place to live.



Richard's Message

I am really enjoying working with you all. I am very pleased that the improvements to Styles have started. I am impressed with the residents' commitment to the TMO. After a successful year we know that we can make the TMO into a great success. Recently, I attended a training course at Browning EMA, another TMO, and saw what can be achieved with effort and time. I found this inspiring and am looking forward to working with the Styles House residents to help develop the TMO's future plans. Day to day there continues to be plenty to do and my job has great variety and different challenges every day.

Kwaku, our cleaner and I work for you. Do get in touch if you think we can help. The TMO office number is 0207 928 6864 or you can email me:

tmomanager@styleshouse.org.uk



Styles House Social Events

The Styles Social Club is now launching a full annual programme for 2015 of what we hope you will find useful, interesting and enjoyable! Warning - there is a lot of eating! With additional funding now agreed, we can launch larger and hopefully more interesting events, if there are things you would like to see please let me know, or put a note through the office door, or comment on the website. The programme includes activities, gallery visits and practical events such as garage sale/swaps .

Some of the events will be in the evening and these include chess, scrabble and card games. There will be a selection of board games on offer but please bring one along you enjoy. In order to make use of our lovely garden, we shall be offering a number of events such as the usual BBQ in the summer and afternoon tea for residents. This programme is a unique opportunity for Styles resident to fully enjoy the benefits of being a TMO.

Sue Dellet—Social Club Chair

Events

Sadly the Bonfire Night event had to be cancelled because our insurance does not cover these type of events. Also, the council does not allow public events of this type on its estates. As it was, it would have been a wash-out anyway, but it was disappointing to have to change everything at short notice.

Styles Social Club Proposed Programme 2015

Gallery Visits

throughout the year

Garage Sale/swap

2 - 4pm held 11th April, 10th October, bring out unwanted or items for exchange

Spring Tea Party

24th May 2 - 4pm

Open Garden Weekend

13th and 14th June

Summer BBQ

Saturday 29th August 2pm onwards

Summer Outings

Margate 30th July

Calais shopping 27th September

Sewing - Knitting - Craft Club

starting Tuesday 24th March 7.00pm

Games Club

starting Sunday 15th March 2.00pm

Autumn BBQ

following on from Lord Mayors Parade in November

For further details on the programme see our website:

www.styleshouse.org.uk

Results of the Ballot for Floor Covering

The results were as follows: Grey – 5 light, 13 dark, Turquoise – 4, Stone Blue – 6. As a result, the foyer will be retiled in dark grey. Work may have already started by the time you read the newsletter.

Other Improvements: This is just the start of many improvements that we would like to make. As a result of suggestions made following the last newsletter, we will be looking at the main entrance doors and the inner doors to see what we can do to make them more attractive and easier to open.

Home Contents Insurance

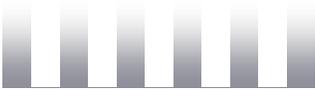
We would like draw to your attention the council's policy on your home contents. The Council will only be responsible for losses and damage to your contents where you can prove that the council has been legally liable for the damage or loss. For example, if you have a leak in your airing cupboard and all your towels and sheets are ruined, you cannot make a claim to the council.

Even where it is established that the council has been negligent or otherwise legally responsible for damage to your contents, the measure of their legal liability will normally be limited to the value of your contents after wear and tear has been taken into account. Most insurance that you take out for yourself will normally be settled on a "new for old" basis. We therefore recommend that you take out a content insurance for your flat.

Check out www.moneysavingexpert.com/insurance/home-insurance

The Deep Clean – coming to a place near you soon!

The last thing we asked the council to do before we became a TMO was to remove the varnish off the landing floors so we could get to the dirt trapped beneath it! We were just at the point of going to the Ombudsman about this when Lee Paige from Southwark Council stepped in and gave Richard the authority to get an outside contractor in to do the work. This is really good news as we have also been able to sneak in a few other bits that need a deep clean with specialist equipment we don't have. Southwark Council will be invoiced for this work. Once the floors have been cleaned, we may be able to make a better assessment as to whether we will need to replace the flooring in the short- or mid-future.



The Christmas Lights

We hope you liked the Christmas trees in the front garden, and you may have noticed that we have put the string of lights on a timer and now have these lit in the evening. Why not? Let's have a bit of cheer whilst we can! And the good news is that we didn't have to pay for these lights; Zoe put in a bid for some funding from the Council and they agreed that it would be a good idea to have decorations in the garden as it is such a prominent part of The Cut. The trees are in storage for Christmas 2015.



The Garden

I'm sure you'll agree that the garden looked lovely last summer. The new 'summer garden' is a bit more peaceful than the front garden and an ideal place to sit and have your lunch, or read a book. We do feel though, that the garden is underused and the gardening team would love to see more of you coming down to enjoy it. For those of you who don't like the sun too much, we have the summer house; so there is no excuse! We are also always happy to accept help in the garden, even if it is just taking on responsibility for watering the planters near the doors, or if you are feeling energetic, helping to cut the grass. Watering the whole garden is a bigger choir and we are always grateful when people volunteer to do this, and those that do, find it very therapeutic. The council used to spend £5000 for garden up-keep, and this is the sum that they have given us in our TMO allowance. By doing the gardening ourselves, including cutting the grass, most of this money can be diverted onto other projects such as re-tiling the entrance halls. So, if you help to cut the grass, or water the borders, you are helping to save money which can be spent on other improvements. We have three lawn mowers; a petrol driven one and two push/pull ones if you would like to help. Much cheaper than the gym and easy to use!



The Board and Sub-committees – your chance to get involved

The Board is made up of nine volunteers and meets monthly. Please let us know if you would like to get involved. We have sub-committees for the following: social events, gardening, HR, communications and finance. Taking part in any of these committees will allow you to become more involved in the TMO including making important decisions and getting to know a few more people. It would also enhance your CV as employers are always keen to employ people who work voluntarily for their community. The TMO is all about the community, what you can do for it, and what it can do for you. If you have any other ideas for volunteer work, or are interested in getting more involved please speak to Richard or Zoe.

The Allotments



We are looking for some committed residents to take on the remaining couple of plots in the allotment. Having a plot in the allotment is very rewarding as it gets you out of the house and gives you the opportunity to make friends with other allotment holders. There is a small charge for each plot depending on which size you take on. If you would like to rent a plot in the allotment please see Philippe by the end of April.

Become a Member of the TMO

It costs only £1 to become a Shareholder in the TMO. This entitles you to vote at meetings and vote on any improvements we make to the block. If you would like to become a member please see Richard or Karen.

T Brown End of Contract

The council has decided to bring the contract with heating contractor T Brown to an end. T Brown currently provides the heating contract for Styles House and also the services for water treatment and dry risers. The heating contract covers the annual gas servicing programme as well as the responsive service for district boilers.

Arrangements have been put in place for contractors OCO to take over the remainder of the T Brown contract. OCO has consistently proved to be the best performing heating contractor. The change will be effective from 11 May 2015 until the existing contract ends in March 2016.

Food Composting

Please do not put bones in the food re-cycling bins.



Don't forget:

The recycling bags are collected on a Monday and should be put outside your front door on Sunday nights.

Development at Southwark Tube Station

You will all have seen the letter from Southwark Council about the planned development on top of Southwark tube station. Those who have lived in Styles House for some years will know that the site above the tube station and the derelict building next to us have been planned for development for many years. The derelict building has been bought by Development Securities and they have entered into an agreement with TfL to build on top of the tube station too. This is likely to be a very tall building as it includes shops and 300 homes. After pressure from us, Southwark Council has confirmed it will not be selling any Council land to Development Securities without further discussion with us; previously, the small block was under threat.

It is important that we enter into discussion with Development Securities to try to keep any development immediately next to us as low as possible, with the bulk of the height going on top of the tube station as this will have the least impact on us.

We will be holding a meeting soon to discuss this and it's important that you come along so that your views can be taken into consideration.

At a previous meeting we agreed that if anyone should demolish and rebuild the small block, it should be the council. If the Council do build housing there, current residents would be able to move back—subject to any change in circumstances, such as medical needs.

No development will be perfect, but it's important that we take action now to have discussions with both the developer to make sure their building has the minimum impact on us, and with the Council to make sure our long-term needs are met. It is also important that you get involved in these discussions, so all the views on the estate are heard, so please come to any meetings that are organised. We will issue regular updates as and when we have any more information, so please keep an eye out.

Zoe Kennedy (Chair Styles House TMO)

